

## Home by [lesbeatlesbunch](#)

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**Summary:**

Mike gets his license.

# Home

## Author's Note:

my first post on here! hope you enjoy :)

"So, you'll have her home by eight?" Hopper's attempt to appear intimidating was negated by the fact that Mike was practically vibrating with joy at his newfound freedom. Hopper always thought that getting a driver's license was a good thing, until his daughter's boyfriend was the one getting the license and all the freedom that came with it.

"Dad!" El whispered in response. Remembering that she wasn't so little anymore, he sighed, "Okay, eight thirty."

"Dad..." She started again, giving him the wide eyed glance that he couldn't say no to.

"Fine. Nine. But not a minute later. Got it, Wheeler?"

"Yes sir!" Mike said with a big smile before reaching for El's hand.

"And keep your hands to yourself!" Hopper reminded him, remembering what he used to do in cars with his dates.

"They'll both be on the wheel, sir!" Mike said over his shoulder.

Hopper laughed to himself. The kid always gave the right answers.

"Bye, Dad!" El said before the door slammed behind her.

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"Okay, so I press the clutch before I shift the gear, see? And now I have to put the car into reverse, so I shift the gear again- shoot, why isn't it shifting..." Mike said, embarrassment seeping in as he couldn't get the car to work how he wanted. "I'm sorry... I swear I did it right today during the test..." Before he began babbling, El put her hand over his on the gear shift.

“Mike. It’s okay.”

“I swear I can do it right, I’m just nervous because I want you to feel safe while I drive, but now I’m screwing it up and we haven’t even started moving yet-”

“Mike.” He stopped talking and looked up at her. “Try it again.”

He took a second to distance himself from the feel of her hand and shifted the car into reverse.

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The beginning of the drive was uneventful and quiet. Mike was focusing on the road, and El was focusing on how much she liked the way that Mike looked behind the wheel. It wasn’t until a few miles in that she realized that she didn’t recognize her surroundings.

“Mike?” She broke the quiet.

“Yeah, El?”

“Where are we going?”

He thought for a second before answering, “I don’t really know. Anywhere.”

With anyone else she would remind them that she had a curfew, but the feeling she had right now was too good to let go, so she simply smiled.

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After a few more miles, he pulled over on a side street and parked the car.

“Why’d you stop?” El asked.

“I’m already tired of driving.” He laughed. “Plus, I like looking at you more than looking at the road.”

El blushed. “Don’t you like driving, though?”

“Yeah, of course I do. I like that I don’t have to rely on my parents or my bike to bring me places anymore. Do you like it?” He asked earnestly.

“I like that we can go anywhere.” El giggled.

Mike ducked his head and waited a second before making eye contact again. “Have you ever thought about leaving Hawkins?” He blurted out.

El was taken aback at his abruptness. “Yeah, I guess. I want to see other cities. New York. I watched a show about it.”

Mike shook his head. “No, I don’t mean on a vacation. I mean, like, running away. But not really. Just leaving. Permanently.”

El suddenly got the feeling that the oxygen was being sucked from the car. “You want to leave Hawkins?” She forced out. She could never imagine leaving- Hawkins was where all their friends were, where Hopper was, where Mike was.

“Sometimes.” He whispered. El could feel her throat closing up and her eyes watering. “Bad stuff happens here. Everything with Will, the Lab, the gate being opened...”

El’s voice was quiet. “That’s how you met me.”

“I know, but-”

Suddenly, she needed to put distance between them. “Can you take me home?” El cut him off.

“What? Why?” Mike asked. It was barely six thirty, and while it was already dark he knew they were supposed to still have time together.

Ever honest, she said, “This is making me sad.”

Mike was confused. “Why is this making you sad?”

“Because I never thought that you would leave all of us-”

“I’m not leaving all of you-”

"I didn't think you would want to leave me. You promised."

Mike grabbed her hands over the console. "No, no, El. I want you to come with me. I would never leave you."

She felt relief crash over her. He didn't want to leave her behind, he wanted to be with her, just the two of them- but her thoughts cut off when Hopper's face floated into her mind.

"I can't. I want to, but I can't leave Hopper." As she spoke, more faces of people that she loved floated into her mind. "And Joyce... she would be so upset, and Dustin, and Max and Lucas, and Will, and Nancy- oh, Nancy! You can't leave her!" She implored Mike.

"I know. I mean, I don't know." He stared at their joined hands.

Suddenly, she realized the underlying message to his proposition. "Mike." He didn't look up. "Mike," She repeated until he raised his head. "What's the real reason you want to leave?"

He went red. "I told you, all the stuff with the Lab..."

"Mike. Friends don't lie." She gently reminded him.

There was a minute where all she heard was the rustle of leaves outside the car before he spoke again. "I don't want to live in my house anymore"

El knows she should've seen this coming. She had experienced it firsthand during that fateful week at the Wheeler's that started it all, but Mike's discontent was becoming more and more prominent. With Nancy away at college, he spent nearly all of his time either at the Hoppers' or the Byers', rarely inviting El over while his parents were home. Sometimes, he would show up at the cabin with Holly in tow, offering no explanation except that he didn't want to leave her at home. At a loss for words, she just put her hand on his cheek and sighed, "Oh, Mike."

He sniffed and El felt a tear trickle onto the hand that was holding Mike's cheek. He took a shaky breath before continuing. "It just sucks, when I spend all day with you or Will, and you get to go home to your parents that love you and you want to be with them. And I

don't feel that way.”

El could feel her heart breaking. She almost felt guilty for having someone like Hopper, who cared for her and loved her unconditionally, while her favorite person in the world was breaking down in front of her because he didn't have someone like that. She wanted to wrap Hopper up and give him to Mike to make him stop crying. “Mike.” She said, grabbing his face with both hands. “You know you're always welcome. You're part of our family.”

“I know, I know, but it's not the same thing. My dad doesn't care about me, my mom doesn't notice when I'm gone. It's like nobody loves me enough to check in.” His voice cracked during the last sentence.

“I love you!” El said fiercely. “I care about you, I want you to be happy. I hate seeing you like this. I wish I could do something to help you.” She could feel tears on her own cheeks now.

“I don't know what to do...” He said between sobs. As El watched, she knew what she had to do.

“I'll go with you. Wherever you want to go. Whatever will make you feel better.” She said.

He looked up through watery eyes. “No, El. I can't make you. You want to stay here. You should stay here. This is your home.”

“No, this is my home.” She gestured between them. When he still looked confused, she explained more. “You are the first person who taught me what a home was. You are the thing I think of when someone says ‘home’. You are my home.”

With that, he wiped the tears out of his eyes and turned the car back on. “I've got to get you back to Hop,” He said with a watery smile. His hand found hers as they drove back, the radio quietly playing in the background.

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The two sat in silence for a moment after Mike parked the car before El said, “So when are we going?”

“Going where?” Mike asked.

“You know. Leaving. When?”

Mike smiled like she was the only light in his world. “Y’know, I think you were right. I would never want you to go just to make me happy, but that doesn’t matter. I’m home when I’m with you.” He looked right into the light. “You make things better.”

“You make me better,” El said before leaning in to find Mike, hoping to convey her emotions.

Mike pulled away after a minute with a dazed look on his face. “I love you.”

“I love you more,” El laughed.

“Not possible,” Mike said earnestly. “Can I walk you to the door?”

El nodded, and the two headed up the path together.